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"A poor man that oppressteth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food."
-Proverbs 28:3

VOL.9 NO. 188

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2019

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Public workers threaten protest



Flashback: A protest under the GDC regime



Alexander B. Cummings

Cummings' economic prescriptions

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Continental News

Ethiopia protesters burn Nobel winner's book

Protesters in eastern Ethiopia have burnt copies of a new book by prime minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner Abiy Ahmed in a show of solidarity with an opposition media activist.

Jawar Mohammed had said the government was removing security from his home in the capital, which officials denied.

This triggered protests outside his compound and elsewhere in the country.

Despite being praised for his reforms the prime minister has struggled to contain growing ethnic rivalries. The police have disputed that security was withdrawn, but Mr Jawar's statement fuelled some frustrations with the government.

In the capital, Addis Ababa, supporters offered to act as Mr Jawar's security detail and protesters were heard shouting: "Down, down, Abiy." The book burning

took place in the town of Dadar. Copies of Mr Abiy's book, Medemer, which was published on Saturday, have been distributed across the country. It focuses on the prime minister's political philosophy as well as his vision for Ethiopia. Mr Jawar used his media

platform, Oromo Media Network (OMN), to report on the 2016-18 wave of anti-government protests under the previous Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn. During those protests OMN gained a huge

following among people in the Oromo community, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, who have felt politically and economically marginalised. At that time the Ethiopian-born journalist was based in the US, where he is a citizen. But he returned to Ethiopia after Mr Abiy took power in April last year and started introducing reforms.

In a flurry of activity in 2018, Mr Abiy freed thousands of political prisoners, ended a state of emergency and unbanned numerous political parties.

The prime minister has allowed more media freedom in a country that human rights groups had previously condemned for its repression of journalists. Previously, the authoritarian state had kept a lid on tensions between Ethiopia's numerous ethnic communities. But many of

those tensions have spilled over into open conflict.

The prime minister, who is himself Oromo, has been accused of ignoring the interests of some groups. Despite returning from exile, Mr Jawar has been critical of Mr Abiy.

This may have irked the prime minister.

"Those media owners who don't have Ethiopian passports are playing both ways," Mr Abiy was quoted as saying in parliament by Reuters news agency. "When there is peace you are playing here, and when we are in trouble you [are] not here." Many saw this as a criticism of the OMN chief. Mr Abiy was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize earlier this month for resolving Ethiopia's border conflict with Eritrea, and promoting peace and reconciliation in his own country and in the region. BBC



Youths gathered outside Jawar Mohammed's compound in the capital, Addis Ababa

Leader of South Africa's largest opposition party quits

The first black leader of South Africa's largest opposition party, Africa's Democratic Alliance (DA), has resigned.

Mmusi Maimane said that despite his best efforts, the traditionally white party was not the "best vehicle" to create a united South Africa. Mr Maimane will still remain as a member of parliament. This is the opposition party's second resignation of a prominent black politician in a week. Mr Maimane will still remain as a

member of parliament.

On Monday, the party's first black mayor resigned.

Herman Mashaba, mayor of Johannesburg, quit DA over how it handles race relations. Mr Maimane said his decision was sparked by the re-admission to the DA of Helen Zille, a white politician who provoked widespread anger in 2017 when she praised aspects of colonialism, to the party's highest ranks. "The election of Zille as chair of federal council is victory for people who are opposed to my

belief systems," he said.

DA federal chairman Athol Trollip admitted the party's shortcomings. "The Democratic Alliance realises that we have made mistakes, we have taken things for granted," he said at a press conference. Mmusi Maimane's resignation as leader of the Democratic Alliance is a dramatic and quite possibly devastating moment for South Africa's official opposition. He said he was stepping down as leader because he had lost faith in the party he's led for the past four years. He didn't quite spell it out, but strongly implied that a white minority in the party was blocking his attempts to reach out to more black voters and address their concerns about racial injustice. The DA lost support in the last elections and is being torn apart by complex internal feuds. Many South Africans believe their young democracy badly needs a strong opposition to challenge, or even unseat, the dominant but jaded African National Congress.

In 25 years, only the DA has ever come close. But the departure of its first black leader is a setback, to put it mildly. BBC



Uganda to charge 16 arrested for 'gay sex'



Uganda's strong opposition to gay rights have often sparked protests around the world

Police in Uganda say 16 people will be charged with having "unnatural sex", a reference to same-sex relations. Police spokesman Fred Enanga said medical examinations proved that the 16 had been having "unnatural sex".

The 16 were arrested on Monday in a suburb neighbouring the capital, Kampala.

Their detention comes

nearly two weeks after the government said it had no plans to re-introduce the anti-homosexuality bill which could impose stiffer penalties, including the death sentence, for gay sex.

Under the penal code, which dates back to the colonial era, anybody convicted of having "unnatural sex" could face life imprisonment. BBC

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EDITORIAL

UL caught in political web

IT IS NO secret that the smooth operation of the University of Liberia (UL) is tied to politics on Capitol Hill, specifically, at the Executive Mansion. The state-run university is always under the dictate of the presidency that has always decided who heads that institution.

AND SO, IT didn't come as a surprise last week Thursday, 17 October when news broke late at night that President George Manneh Weah, current Visitor to the University, has dismissed the 14th president and second female to head that institution, Dr. Ophelia Inez Weeks, a Neurologist.

DR. WEEKS HAS been replaced by the former Dean of Students, Dr. Julius Sarwolo Nelson, Jr., a former head of the department of young adult affairs at the Liberia Annual Conference, United Methodist Church.

BUT THE MAIN issue that drew public concern is that President Weah announced the abrupt change Thursday night just as lecturers at the University were poised to boycott classes on Friday, 18 October in demand of salary arrears owed them by the government, which they did despite appeal by the UL administration. Earlier in the week, public school students had protested here in solidarity with their teachers who staged a go-slow in demand of three months' unpaid salaries.

THE DISMISSAL AT the UL also came days after ruling Coalition lawmaker, Moses Acarous Gray reportedly called on President Weah to get rid of traitors and haters working against the government's interest without specifically naming anyone. Subsequently, Dr. Weeks is purged from the University.

EARLY FRIDAY, RUMOR circulated on the Fendell Campus that lecturers and staff's salaries were in the bank, ready for disbursement though not independently confirmed.

HOWEVER, THIS WE know for fact; since the inception of the Weah-led government, the University of Liberia had never faced any major financial problem that would cause lecturers to boycott classes for pay except when President Weah drove at the UL main campus on Capitol Hill in 2017, while Dr. Weeks was out of the country and abruptly announced a tuition-freed program for undergraduates, a pronouncement that led many Liberians to question where would the government source funding for such program.

THAT CONCERN HAS never been addressed by the Executive, particularly the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. The Liberian Senate had concluded definitively after listening to various stakeholders that the tuition-freed scheme at the University is unsustainable.

DR. WEEKS HAS been purged as the sacrificial lamb in wake of growing dissent both among students and faculty at the UL just as it is among the entire population over general economic situations across Liberia.

HER SUCCESSOR, DR. Sarwolo Nelson, would perhaps have to perform magic to keep that institution financially afloat because the reality in the country has not changed and wouldn't change in the short-run.

The
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COMMENTARY

By Joschka Fischer

The Middle East's Dangerous New Hegemonic Confrontation

Although Yemen's Houthi rebels have claimed credit for the sophisticated nighttime strike on Saudi oil facilities last month, the attack was almost certainly launched by Iran. By giving Iran no other option but to demonstrate its military prowess, US President Donald Trump has exposed himself and his Saudi allies as paper tigers.

BERLIN - In the old Middle East, a single overarching conflict - between Israel and the Arab countries - had many fronts, and it was the West's prerogative to protect the flow of oil to the global economy. In the new Middle East, the defining conflict is a broader struggle among multiple players seeking regional primacy.

This new struggle began when former US President Barack Obama initiated America's broader withdrawal from the region, but it has intensified under Donald Trump. Obama, at least, had a political vision for the region. With the 2015 Iran nuclear deal having forestalled a nuclear-arms race, he hoped that an easing of sanctions and faster economic growth would permit Iran's gradual reintegration into the international community over the following decade. Trump, by contrast, has no strategy, and wants to disguise America's retreat from the region, currently demonstrated in Syria by the open betrayal of the Kurds, with militant rhetoric and massive arms exports to US partners and allies in the Gulf.

For its part, Saudi Arabia, the region's wealthy, predominantly Sunni power (if one doesn't count Turkey), has long harbored ambitions for regional hegemony - at least in the Persian Gulf and on the Arabian Peninsula - and views predominantly Shia Iran as its main rival. For the past few years, Iran and Saudi Arabia have been waging a disastrous proxy war in Yemen, resulting in a massive toll of civilian casualties and a humanitarian catastrophe.

But the situation changed last month, when a nighttime attack targeting the heart of the Saudi oil industry sent shockwaves through the global economy. Several drones managed to cross into Saudi airspace undetected, where they launched precise attacks on key oil installations. The Saudi air defenses - if there were any - seem to have been fast asleep, suggesting that the attackers had intimate knowledge of local conditions.

A midnight attack without warning raises obvious questions. Who did it, and how did they pull it off? The Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed responsibility, but they are in no position to carry out such an attack. Given the technology used and the logistics involved, the only plausible suspect is Iran, despite the Iranian government's vehement denials. And in terms of motive and interest, it is clear that Iran has profited the most from the strike.

Saudi Arabia, after all, has been humiliated in the eyes of the world and exposed as a loud-mouthed paper tiger. In addition to the undeniable failure of Saudi counterintelligence to detect or avert the attack is the equally obvious fact that Saudi Arabia will lose the war in Yemen sooner or later. At that point, its hegemonic aspirations will become an even greater source of

derision.

And so, in the final analysis, responsibility for the attack on Saudi Arabia almost certainly lies with Qassem Suleimani, the general who commands the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' foreign operations unit. With this attack, Iran has proven itself to be a major regional power with impressive technical and logistical capabilities that cannot be easily thwarted. That could fundamentally change the strategic calculus in the region. All the oil monarchies on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf are doubtless already reassessing their foreign-policy outlook, interests, and loyalties.

Iran has also left Trump looking weak. Following his refusal to respond militarily to an attack on a cherished regional ally, Trump fired his national security adviser, John Bolton, an archenemy of the Iranian regime. No one should shed any tears for Bolton. But nor can one rule out the possibility that his ouster has invited this attack.

Trump's foreign-policy dilettantism - his use of militant bombast to mask his lack of plausible options and strategy - seems to have played a crucial role in bringing about the current situation. His decision to abandon the Iran nuclear deal with no thought for what would come afterward has proven to be the height of folly and will be very dangerous.

But there is one other dynamic to consider. Following the G7 summit in Biarritz, France, in late August, there was talk of a possible meeting between Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. The attack on Saudi oil facilities came just weeks later, shortly before both leaders were in New York City for the United Nations General Assembly, where they could have met. The question, then, is whether the attack was an outgrowth of a broader internal power struggle between Iranian radicals and moderates.

Whatever the case may be, with Saudi Arabia's position already eroding, the region's two real remaining military powers are Israel and Iran. Already, the two countries appear to be moving toward a dangerous confrontation. Israel is deeply worried about Iran's apparent capacity to launch precise long-distance attacks with drones or ballistic/cruise missiles. And if that were not already a significant threat to Israel's national security, Iran could try to supply Hezbollah or its other regional proxies with similar capabilities.

Were Israel to be attacked with the same precision and sophistication as the strike on Saudi Arabia, the Middle East would be plunged into war on a scale beyond anything it has experienced so far. Sadly (but happily for Russian President Vladimir Putin), that is the reality of a world in which the US has abandoned any pretense of global leadership.

O-PED

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

Why Rich Cities Rebel

NEW YORK - Three of the world's more affluent cities have erupted in protests and unrest this year. Paris has faced waves of protests and rioting since November 2018, soon after French President Emmanuel Macron raised fuel taxes. Hong Kong has been in upheaval since March, after Chief Executive Carrie Lam proposed a law to allow extradition to the Chinese mainland. And Santiago exploded in rioting this month after President Sebastian Piñera ordered an increase in metro prices. Each protest has its distinct local factors, but, taken together, they tell a larger story of what can happen when a sense of unfairness combines with a widespread perception of low social mobility.

By the traditional metric of GDP per capita, the three cities are paragons of economic success. Per capita income is around \$40,000 in Hong Kong, more than \$60,000 in Paris, and around \$18,000 in Santiago, one of the wealthiest cities in Latin America. In the 2019 Global Competitiveness Report issued by the World Economic Forum, Hong Kong ranks third, France 15th, and Chile 33rd (the best in Latin America by a wide margin).

Yet, while these countries are quite rich and competitive by conventional standards, their populations are dissatisfied with key aspects of their lives. According to the 2019 World Happiness Report, the citizens of Hong Kong, France, and Chile feel that their lives are stuck in important ways.

Each year, the Gallup Poll asks people all over the world, "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?" While Hong Kong ranks ninth globally in GDP per capita, it ranks far lower, in 66th place, in terms of the public's perception of personal freedom to choose a life course. The same discrepancy is apparent in France (25th in GDP per capita but 69th in freedom to choose) and Chile (48th and 98th, respectively).

Ironically, both the Heritage Foundation and Simon Fraser University rank Hong Kong as having the most economic freedom in the entire world, yet Hong Kong residents despair of their freedom to choose what to do with their lives. In all three countries, urban young people not born into wealth despair of their chances of finding affordable housing and a decent job. In Hong Kong, property prices relative to average salaries are among the highest in the world. Chile has the highest income inequality in the OECD, the club of high-income countries. In France, children of elite families have vast advantages in their life course.

Hong Kong, France, and Chile are hardly alone in facing a crisis of social mobility and grievances over inequality. The United States is experiencing soaring suicide rates and other signs of social distress, such as mass shootings, at a time of unprecedented inequality and a collapse in public trust in government. The US will certainly see more social explosions ahead if we continue with politics and economics as usual.

If we are to head off that outcome, we must draw some lessons from the three recent cases. All three governments were blindsided by the protests. Having lost touch with public sentiment, they failed to anticipate that a seemingly modest policy action (Hong Kong's extradition bill, France's fuel-tax increase, and higher metro prices in Chile) would trigger a massive social explosion.

Perhaps most important, and least surprising, traditional economic measures of wellbeing are wholly insufficient to gauge the public's real sentiments. GDP per capita measures an economy's average income, but says nothing about its distribution, people's perceptions of fairness or injustice, the public's sense of financial vulnerability, or other conditions (such as trust in the government) that weigh heavily on the overall quality of life. And rankings like the World Economic Forum's Global Competitive Index, the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, and Simon Fraser University's measure of Economic Freedom of the World also capture far too little about the public's subjective sense of fairness, freedom to make life choices, the government's honesty, and the perceived trustworthiness of fellow citizens.

To learn about such sentiments, it is necessary to ask the public directly about their life satisfaction, sense of personal freedom, trust in government and compatriots, and about other dimensions of social life that bear heavily on life quality and therefore on the prospects of social upheaval. That's the approach taken by Gallup's annual surveys on wellbeing, which my colleagues and I report on each year in the World Happiness Report.

The idea of sustainable development, reflected in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the world's governments in 2015, is to move beyond traditional indicators such as GDP growth and per capita income, to a much richer set of objectives, including social fairness, trust, and environmental sustainability. The SDGs, for example, draw specific attention not only to income inequality (SDG 10), but also to broader measures of wellbeing (SDG 3).

It behooves every society to take the pulse of its population and heed well the sources of social unhappiness and distrust. Economic growth without fairness and environmental sustainability is a recipe for disorder, not for wellbeing. We will need far greater provision of public services, more redistribution of income from rich to poor, and more public investment to achieve environmental sustainability. Even apparently sensible policies such as ending fuel subsidies or raising metro prices to cover costs will lead to massive upheavals if carried out under conditions of low social trust, high inequality, and a widely shared sense of unfairness.

OPINION

By Javier Solana

The Partial Triumph of 1989

MADRID - November 9, 1989, is a date my generation will never forget, and one that will forever be inscribed in human history. On that day nearly 30 years ago, the Berlin Wall fell. The break-up of the Soviet bloc showed that communism was to become the second great ideological failure of the twentieth century, following the demise of fascism a few decades earlier. Liberal capitalism and its main exponent, the United States, reigned supreme, seemingly destined to enjoy a long, unchallenged hegemony.

Many countries flourished in the new environment. Poland, for example, installed a non-communist-led government shortly before the Berlin Wall fell, and, after overcoming some early transition problems, moved smoothly toward NATO and the European Union. The Polish economy last experienced a full-year contraction in 1991. And in 2009, when every other EU member state's GDP shrank, Poland's grew by almost 3%.

Today, however, we know that 1989 marked the end not of history as such, but of a specific chapter in history. Western liberal democracy, which Francis Fukuyama predicted would enjoy eternal supremacy after 1989, now faces an increasingly serious challenge from illiberal forces.

America's period of dominance also turned out to be short-lived. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the US showed how vulnerable a great power could be to emerging non-state actors. In addition, China's accession to the World Trade Organization the same year gave further impetus to that country's spectacular rise. American hegemony crumbled, and the world gradually got used to speaking the language of multipolarity.

The rise of China has shattered many previous assumptions. Back in November 1989, the Communist Party of China (CPC) seemed extremely vulnerable. The other spearhead of communism - the Soviet Union - was facing an increasingly evident crisis, while China was still licking its wounds in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests.

The CPC reacted to these two episodes by closing all doors to political liberalization. In the end, contrary to many predictions, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not lead to the downfall of the CPC in China. Nor has China's economic development undermined its autocratic model, at least up to now. On the contrary, the CPC is reinforcing its primacy under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, and some governments have even begun to look to China's authoritarian development model as a source of inspiration.

But the Chinese authorities' alternative narrative has some blind spots. The People's Republic of China recently celebrated its 70th anniversary, thus outliving the Soviet Union. But communist China is not 70 years old: despite the official rhetoric, China's economic takeoff was mainly the result of Deng Xiaoping's liberalizing 1978 reforms, and the country's leaders no longer harbor communist ambitions. As the economist Branko Milanovic argues in his new book *Capitalism, Alone*, today's Chinese model represents a different kind of capitalism, not a different economic system altogether. In this sense, Fukuyama's predictions are yet to be proven wrong, as capitalism still has no rival worldwide.

The fact that nominally communist China is among globalization's staunchest defenders is one of the great paradoxes of our time. In reality, China's openness to the outside world is still relatively limited. But its government is nonetheless assuming a leading role in certain economic forums, mostly because others will not. The two major powers that previously did the most to promote free commerce - the US and the United Kingdom - are now in full retreat. These days, globalization is more popular in Asia than in the West.

Many in the US and Europe believe that globalization's so-called losers have helped to bring illiberal figures such as US President Donald Trump to power. But economics provides only a partial explanation for this trend.

Consider Poland again. Despite becoming a poster child of a successful transition from socialism to liberal capitalism, and despite sidestepping the Great Recession, the country has embraced illiberalism in the form of the Law and Justice (PiS) party, which recently won its second consecutive parliamentary election. Although PiS has capitalized on economic discontent among some parts of the population, it has also tapped into deeper and more widespread concerns about Polish national identity. It is important to recall the extent to which Poland's autonomy has been constrained in the last century - either involuntarily (by foreign powers' occupation or control) or voluntarily (by joining the European Union). This record has led many Poles to distrust internationalist and cosmopolitan ideals.

Far from being antithetical, therefore, capitalism and illiberalism are now advancing in tandem and consolidating globally. And the progress of information technology could strengthen each of them simultaneously.

Since the invention of the World Wide Web (as it happens, in 1989), its impact has been more ambivalent than expected. In a sense, the Internet has helped to unite people, but it has also divided societies into echo chambers. Moreover, some governments are exploring the potential of the Internet - and related resources such as big data - as a tool for social control. The obvious example is the CPC, which wants to avoid any and all potential disruptions to its plans to reach "full development" in 2049, the centenary of the People's Republic.

In his book *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, Yuval Noah Harari writes that, "If somebody describes to you the world of the mid-21st century and it sounds like science fiction, it is probably false." But, he adds, "if somebody describes to you the world of the mid-21st century and it doesn't sound like science fiction - it is certainly false." In other words, the only certainty is unforeseeable change.

Because our predictions almost always miss the mark, it is best to avoid both fatalism and euphoria when looking toward the future. Thirty years from now, we could be living in a world where illiberal powers constantly collide. Or it could be a world in which values such as democracy and multilateralism have staged a comeback. The lesson from 1989 is that we should be modest. But that does not mean that we should become passive: what we choose to do today will unquestionably leave a mark on the world of tomorrow.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

LRA launches new strategy to ease revenue generation

By Bridgett Milton

The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) has launched a new application to help make the registration and payment of real property tax easier. The new application known as the LRA App will be

Real Property Tax Payment and Find LRA Staff.

Speaking at the launch of the App, LRA Commissioner General Mr. Thomas Doe Nah says if the institution is not collecting taxes, the society will collapse. He notes that the taxes

According to Mr. Nah, Liberia has been at that level for the last five to six years.

Displaying the "Know LRA Staff" App, the LRA Boss calls on the public to report any LRA employee that is not serving the public well.

The launch of the first ever LRA Mobile App is in line with goal four of the LRA's 5-year corporate strategic plan which underscores the use of information communication technology in the collection of the country revenue.

Speaking recently at the Ministry of Information's weekly press briefing in Monrovia, Mr. Nah discloses that the reform measures will include recalibrating and restructuring of the operations of the Domestic Tax Department with a focus on increasing real property tax and improving efficiencies.

He says the LRA is currently working along with other government stakeholders and partners to kick start other meaningful tax reform measures such as insurance of visa on arrival and including airline tickets rationalization.

Commissioner General Nah encourages members to report acts of tax fraud through whistle blowing as a means of helping the Authority to weed out would be bad apples.--
Edited by Winston W. Parley



downloaded on smart phones from Google Play Store, used to acquire tax identification numbers and used to calculate taxes.

The applications launched Tuesday, 22 October include Obtain Your TIN; Make Your

collected are being used for hospital, salaries, and security forces, among other things.

In the midst of challenges, Mr. Nah indicates that it is possible to expand LRA's tax base because Liberia cannot continue to survive on \$500m.

AfDB assures Public Works of funding for Voinjama road project

By Ethel A. Tweh

Public Works Minister Mobutu Nyenpan says the African Development Bank (AfDB) has assured the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) that funding the road from Voinjama to

concerned about quality road construction so that it doesn't get spoiled very early.

The Public Works Minister reminds Liberians that road users need to pay a small



Public Works Minister Mobutu Nyenpan

Kalahun, Lofa County will be the next line of projects [that the bank will consider].

Speaking on a local radio Tuesday, 22 October, Mr. Nyenpan says MPW is

amount to assist in the construction of the roads.

According to him, trucks usually use the Diggsville road in



CIPS Trainees undergo week long certification exercise

A batch of Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply (CIPS) level 4 trainees undergo one week certification exercise in Monrovia, 21-25 October 2019.

The 40 beneficiaries drawn from Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) across the country, form part of the second session for CIPs level 4.

The first batch of 39 has completed their training. CIPS is designed to qualify and internationally accredit public sector procurement practitioners.

UNDP has made significant investment in supporting the Public Procurement Concession Commission (PPCC) to conduct regular CIPS Level trainings as a way of professionalizing the procurement sector of Liberia, with an aim of ensuring value for money and

upholding accountability, integrity and transparency.

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative for Programme Violet Baffour during the opening session, emphasized

that public procurement remains a critical part of promoting social accountability, governance and sustainable development.

Ms. Baffour stressed that



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the issues of corruption and human resource constraints faced by many public and private institutions in the administration of procurement are vices that slow down the growth of public sector reforms.

"Public procurement is an essential governance tool, and the way it is executed reflects the level of social accountability," says Baffour.

She described the PPCC Act of 2010 as the cornerstone of dispensing procurement justice and preventing fraud in the procurement of goods and services for the population.

The Deputy Resident Representative extolled the Leadership role of the Commission and committed UNDP to matching the efforts of the PPCC as it relates to capacity development for its staff.

She encouraged the beneficiaries to use the skills, and knowledge to build efficient and effective standards of procurement processes that will be recognized internationally.

Speaking earlier, PPCC Deputy Commissioner Joseph Suah noted that the certification procurement programme was important to eliminating wastage in government.

Suah emphasized that the Commission is keen on improving and building the capacities of staff at various MACs so that government can realize savings.

He showered appreciation upon UNDP for its enormous support and urged beneficiaries to strive for excellence in meeting high standards of transparency, accountability and Integrity.

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Mayor Koijee justifies War Crimes Court

Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson T. Koijee says establishment of an extraordinary court for Liberia is necessary for justice and national healing thus, reaffirming his support for War and Economic Crimes Court here.

He maintains the establishment such court will ensure prosecution of those accused of perpetrating atrocity during the 14 years bloody civil war in the country, which will guarantee peace and social healing.

According to a dispatch, Mayor Koijee spoke in a live radio interview Friday, in the United States, where he is currently visiting.

The comment by the Monrovia City Mayor, who also chairs the Youth League of the governing Coalition for Democratic Change is a complete contradiction to CDC lawmakers here who recently refused to sign a resolution in the House, endorsing the establishment of an extraordinary court to prosecute war and economic crimes during the country's civil war.

However, Koijee insists that those who allegedly committed hideous crimes in Liberia should be made to account for their actions in a



court of competent jurisdiction.

He notes that his advocacy for the court can't in no way be undermined by his position in government, stressing that the ultimate means to sustaining peace, genuine reconciliation and development in Liberia is through establishment of the court.

"We must seek to end the scourge of impunity in Liberia by using the law and holding people accountable for their wrongdoings," says the City Mayor.

He lauds President George Weah for making moves that may lead to the establishment of said court for Liberia.

President Weah, who recently submitted recommendations from a National Economic Dialogue to the Legislature, seeking advice of lawmakers on addressing human rights violations, including war and economic crimes, had himself been sending mixed signals when he appeared before the 74th General Assembly of the United Nations and questioned

why the clamor now for the court when previous regime under which the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed in Accra, Ghana that led to the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were never pressurized to implement recommendations of the TRC that calls for the establishment of the court.

Though the TRC recommended the establishment of a special court in 2009, that call was given less attention by former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Thousands of people were killed, women and girls raped, and children used as soldiers in the war.

Meanwhile, Mayor Koijee warns against continuous protestation in Liberia, something, he notes has the ability to negatively impact image of the country and discourage investors.

"We understand that things are difficult as the result of the economic situation in our country but we cannot use the situation to score political points by continuously staging protest at the detriment of the people we claim to love."

He cautions young Liberians to avoid being used as tools for violence, saying young people have an opportunity today

under President Weah that they might not have years to come.

He also warns against shifting blames on the past government for the current challenges, rather, calling on officials of the Weah administration to work harder to achieving the pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development.

"We didn't come to government to shift blame on other people. We came to government on the slogan of change", he reminds.

Koijee notes the past government has served and gone, adding that whether they created the messy state of our country economic or not, it is time we rise to the occasion to work in the interest of the people who gave us the popular mandate to serve".

"It is time that government officials regain the trust and confidence of their communities by sharing with them, engaging them with sincerity and explaining the actual realities on ground".

The Mayor is on an official state visit to Washington, D.C to establish a sister-city relationship which will promote economic development and exchange of ideas and programs between Monrovia and Washington, D.C.

D-8 watch team screen applicants

By Emmanuel Mondaye

To ensure that persons recruited into the service of Community Policing Watch Team of Saye Town Community in electoral district #8, Montserrado County, the community leadership releases information bulletin, requesting the public to provide information about candidates seeking

recruitment into the watch team.

A public bulletin posted in various parts of Saye Town, appeals to residents of the community to provide any information they have on applicants whose photographs are posted to ensure that people with criminal records didn't infiltrate the system to undermine the security and peace of the community.

The bulletin assures

community dwellers and non-residents that information provided would strictly be kept confidential.

Names of some applicants include Michael Toe, Block-B; Mark Bullet, Block-C; Gabriel Paye, Block-B; Samuel Karnley, Block-A; Tom Sherman, Block-D; Clearance S. Zee, Block-D, and David Moore, Block-D, respectively.

Others are: Emmanuel D. Wantee, Block-B; TeoUrias, Block-B; Emmanuel Barclay, Block-B; Bestman S. Smith, Block-B; Alvin Williams, Block-B; Kameh T. Bengue, Block-D; Robert Togba, Block-D, and Othello Smith, Block-D.

Also seeking service in the watch team include Prince Harmon, Block-D; Martin Hurley, Block-B; Abraham Zomboo, Block-B; Esther Momamand, Block-B; Tommy F. Williams, Block-A and Samuel Paye, Block-B, respectively.

Members of the public with information on these individuals are requested to channel same thru cell phone numbers: 0777050278, 0778504183 and 0779082632, respectively. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



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AfDB assures Public Works

Cont'd from page 5

Montserrado County and put the road in a bad condition.

Mr. Nyenpan indicates that trucks [operators or owners] need to pay some money which could be used towards improving the condition of the Diggsville road.

Meanwhile Mr. Nyenpan reveals that MPW has provided the opportunity to Liberian construction constructors to get involved in the construction of roads here.

He argues that the Ministry is not hand-picking contractors, saying they have to go through the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC) to enable them to get the contract.

According to Mr. Nyenpan, there are more Liberian construction companies involved with the work done by the MPW on the various roads here, but stresses that the

capacities of the local firms need to be built.

Additionally, Mr. Nyenpan says Public Works will demolish structures that were constructed on drainages across Monrovia because they are obstructing the free flow of wastes.

He details that the Minister of Finance has signed a financing agreement with other partners [for] a loan agreement during a meeting held with the World Bank for road project in Lofa.

Nyenpan adds that funding has been secured for the Salayea road project and to also pave the road from Gbarnga, Bong County to Voinjama, Lofa County.

He concludes that active road works will resume in early November. **-Edited by Winston W. Parley**

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

NEC Election Law Reform consultation opens in Buchanan

The Chairman of the National Elections Commission of Liberia (NEC) has assured political parties, Civil Society Organizations, and special Focused Groups of the Commission's commitment to consolidate Liberia's democracy.

Whilst declaring the official opening of the NEC Electoral Law Reform Consultation in Grand Bassa County, Cllr. Jerome Korkoya said "I want to assured you of the Commission's continued commitment to working with Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, and special Focused Groups in the consolidation and nurturing of Liberia's nascent democracy through the consistent and effective delivery of free, fair, and credible elections at all times".

The Buchanan Law Reform Consultations is a high-level meeting of Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations, and Focused Groups, including the media, religious groups and youth and woman groups among others. It is bordering on the General Administration of NEC, Voter Registration, Electoral Justice, and Constitutional Issues for Long Term.

Following the 2017 presidential and Representative elections, both local and international observer groups, totaling 102, recommended 144 legal electoral reforms. Of this amount, 107 recommendations came from Liberia observer groups. These recommendations were addressed to the NEC and the Executive and Legislature branches of the government of Liberia. They were also made to the Liberian National Police (LNP) and stakeholders, including



political parties and civil society organizations.

Considering the importance of the recommendations and pursuant to 2.9 (c) of the New Elections Law, the Board of Commissioners of the NEC constituted a Technical Working Group (TWG), headed by the deputy Executive Director for Programs of NEC, Nathan Garbie. The mandate is to review the recommendations particularly directed at NEC to identify a "Reform Agenda" to undertake in the period 2019 - 2023.

The TWG considered 84 recommendations of the 144, accepted 59, declined 10 and decided to refer 15 to other institutions for their considerations. Of the 59, 32 can be actioned through adoption of regulation (without prior change in legislation) adoption of policy or through strengthening implementation strategy.

The remaining 27 of the 59 requires changes to the Legislation (statute) and Constitution of Liberia.

Cllr. Korkoya said the NEC is mandated by the constitution

of Liberia under section 2.9 of the New Elections Laws of 1986 to "propose to the National Legislature for enactment, amendment to, and appeal of any provision of the Election Laws". The NEC Chairman said the Commission does this "through the three-segment electoral cycle: pre-election period, election period, and post-election period (the current period).

Chairman Korkoya said the Commission is "happy that the Chairpersons and members of the committees on elections in both the Liberian Senate the House of Representatives have been closely following this process". Senator Milton Teahjay and Representative Alex Grant have been a part of the NEC nationwide consultations since its inception in June 2019.

The NEC Chair also praised the UNDP, USAID, EU, Irish Aid, and Canada for funding the consultation. He thanked ECOWAS and AU for their support to Commission.

The new UNDP deputy Resident Representative for programs thanked the

Commission for living up to the recommendations from national and international observer groups for electoral reform following the 2017 elections.

Ms. Violet Baffour said, "These consultations are vital in further strengthening public confidence and engagement in Liberia's electoral process". However, she said she would want "more attention and action in ensuring the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities". She said the reform, which include the tenure of the elected officials, change of Election Day, and amendments to the Electoral Dispute Resolution, "must be followed by a strong action".

For her part, the deputy Mission Director of USAID said the "historic 2017 elections in many ways signaled the growing maturation of Liberia's young democracy. However, they also revealed some shortcomings in the electoral process that could threaten the credibility of future elections if not immediately addressed".

Ms. Rebekah Eubanks said changing of the election date from the rain to the dry and changing of laws to include more female candidates "seem to be widespread agreements". Ms. Eubanks said, "accordingly, we will see these as items on the ballot for Constitutional Amendment".

The USAID deputy Director said, "Liberia has shown that free, fair, and competitive elections provide a reliable path from conflict to genuine peace and reconciliation ". Ms. Eubanks said "for peace to be sustained and lasting, the people must have unwavering faith in the electoral system-that it will truly allow their voices to be heard no matter their gender, ethnicity, economic status or political affiliation".

The Buchanan high-level Electoral Law Reform Consultation will run from today October 22-24, 2019. It follows series of consultations held across the Country that included local government officials, traditional leaders, and woman and youth groups. The meetings were held in Tubmanburg, Bomi County involving Bomi, Cape Mount, Gbarpolu and Upper Montserrado. The second was held in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County involving citizens of host Bassa, Margibi, and Rivercess. Then was Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe, and Grand Kru Counties in Zwedru City. The last of the consultations was held in Gbarnga involving Bong, Lofa, and Nimba Counties.

Upon completion of the Consultations, the NEC will send the draft proposal, after validation, to the Legislature for enactment.

Rep. Koffa blames opposition

Starts from back page

of such action or behavior. Why opposition reduced themselves to protest only to show hate for the government? There are many options to be used to be heard than taking the streets. These protests prevent investors from coming here to invest and if investors cannot come then the economy remains tougher for every one of us," he blasts.

Commenting on recent cuts in lawmakers' salaries and benefits, Koffa foams the decision is the 'most unjustifiable' thing ever

meted against them as representatives of the people.

He argues that lawmakers especially, those from leeward counties use their salaries and benefits to impact electorate and residents who have felt government's direct developmental impact.

"Since my entry here as lawmaker for my county, my salary and benefits have never entered my pocket; they are managed by staff for the upkeep of the hospital, construction of schools, salaries for 62 staffs hired as county coordinators to boost the economy will be affected

greatly in Grand Kru County."

Rep. Koffa says he did go to the Capitol for personal earnings but rather to serve the needs and aspirations of his county and the country at large.

"Nobody in their rightful mind will think that I came here for US\$15,000 pay; I'm far bigger than that, in fact, I'm getting poorer by the day since I came here. I spend more from my law office now than ever before. Just last week I spent about LRD400, 000 on scholarship from my personal pocket," he reveals. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Cummings' economic

Starts from back page

generation to homes and businesses. We cannot be producing a commodity that everyone wants but cannot supply because of government's inefficiencies. We are losing out on millions", he alarms.

Meanwhile, the former coca cola executive says reducing taxes is key to spurring further economic growth since it provides an outlet through which people have more after-tax income (increasing their spending power) and provides

greater incentives for firms to invest more in the country.

"For many of our civil servants, lower taxes will provide the opportunity to take home more income and help offset the growing inflation rate. Additionally, because taxes are aligned to better collection in order to be effective, higher taxes encourage tax evasion and reduced tax revenue", he concludes. -Story by Jonathan Browne

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Français

Le maire Koijeese fait porte-parole des partisans de la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre

Le maire de la ville de Monrovia, Jefferson T. Koijee, a réaffirmé son soutien à la création d'un tribunal extraordinaire des crimes de guerre et crimes économiques au Libéria. C'est pour lui la seule chose qui permettra au Libéria de renouer avec la justice et permettra aux fils et filles de cette nation de se réconcilier véritablement.

Il a indiqué que l'établissement d'un tel tribunal obligera non seulement les gens qui ont commis des atrocités pendant les 14 années de guerre civile sanglante dans le pays à répondre de leurs crimes, mais aussi cela promouvra la paix et assurera la guérison sociale.

Selon une dépêche, le maire Koijee a dévoilé sa position par rapport à cette question lors d'une interview

avec une radio aux États-Unis d'Amérique où il se trouve actuellement.

Les propos du maire de Monrovia, qui préside également la Ligue des jeunes de la Coalition pour le

changement démocratique au pouvoir, sont en porte-à-faux avec la position des législateurs du parti pouvoir qui ont récemment refusé de signer une résolution de la Chambre des

représentants qui avalisait la création d'un tribunal extraordinaire des crimes de guerre et crimes économiques.

Koijee veut que les auteurs présumés des crimes odieux soient tenus de rendre compte de leurs actes devant un tribunal compétent. Il a affirmé que son plaidoyer en faveur de la création d'un tribunal pour le Libéria ne peut en aucun cas faire l'objet de compromis par sa position au sein du gouvernement, soulignant que le moyen ultime de maintenir la paix, une réconciliation véritable et le développement au Libéria est la création de ce tribunal.

« Nous devons chercher à mettre fin à la culture d'impunité au Libéria en appliquant la loi et en tenant les personnes pour responsables de leurs actes », a déclaré le maire de la ville de Monrovia.

Il a rendu hommage au président George Weah pour avoir pris des mesures qui pourraient conduire à la création dudit tribunal pour le Libéria.

Le Président Weah, qui a récemment soumis au Parlement des recommandations issues d'un dialogue économique national, tout en demandant conseil aux législateurs sur les violations des droits de l'homme, avait lui-même envoyé des signaux contradictoires lorsqu'il a comparu devant la 74ème Assemblée générale des Nations Unies. Il s'interrogeait pourquoi les appels à la création d'un tel tribunal se sont intensifiés maintenant alors que le régime sous lequel l'accord de paix global avait été signé à Accra, au Ghana, qui avait conduit à la formation de la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation (CVR), n'avait pas fait l'objet de pression pour mettre en œuvre les recommandations de la CVR.

Bien que la CVR ait recommandé la création d'un tribunal spécial en 2009, l'ancien président Ellen Johnson Sirleaf a accordé moins d'attention à cet appel.

Des milliers de personnes ont été tuées, des femmes et des filles violées et des enfants utilisés comme soldats pendant la guerre.

Par ailleurs, le maire

Koijee dit regretter les manifestations de rue qui sont devenues récurrentes au Libéria. Selon lui, cela a la capacité de ternir l'image du pays et de décourager les investisseurs.

« Nous comprenons que la situation économique de notre pays rend les choses difficiles, mais nous ne pouvons pas nous servir de cette situation pour marquer des points politiques en organisant en permanence des manifestations au détriment des personnes que nous prétendons aimer. »

Il a appelé les jeunes libériens à ne pas se laisser utiliser par les politiciens pour recourir à la violence, car ils ont une grande opportunité aujourd'hui sous le régime de Weah.

Il a également appelé les responsables du gouvernement actuel à ne pas passer tout leur temps à accuser le gouvernement précédent d'être responsable des défis auxquels le pays est actuellement confronté. Il incombe aux responsables de l'administration Weah de redoubler d'efforts pour que le programme en faveur des pauvres pour la prospérité et le développement profite vraiment aux pauvres.

« Nous ne sommes pas arrivés au pouvoir pour renvoyer la faute à d'autres personnes. Nous sommes venus au gouvernement avec le slogan du changement », a-t-il rappelé.

Selon Koijee, le gouvernement précédent a servi et est parti. « Qu'il ait créé une économie désordonnée dans notre pays ou pas, il est temps que nous prenions la peine de travailler dans l'intérêt de la population qui nous a confié le mandat populaire de servir ».

« Il est temps que les responsables du gouvernement retrouvent la confiance de leurs communautés en partageant avec elles, en les engageant avec sincérité et en expliquant les vraies réalités sur le terrain ».

Le maire est en visite officielle à Washington DC pour établir une relation entre villes jumelées qui favorisera le développement économique et l'échange d'idées et de programmes entre Monrovia et Washington DC.



Sénégal : remous politiques après le limogeage de plusieurs hauts fonctionnaires

Au Sénégal, beaucoup de réactions après le limogeage de trois hauts fonctionnaires, lundi 21 octobre. Parmi eux, Sory Kaba, directeur général des Sénégalais de l'extérieur, qui s'était prononcé publiquement contre un troisième mandat de Macky Sall. Il a été limogé par le président. Ce qui pose question au sein même du parti présidentiel.

La page de la présidentielle de février à peine tournée, la question d'un éventuel troisième mandat du président Macky Sall fait déjà débat. Invité

dimanche dernier sur la radio RFM, Sory Kaba déclare que la Constitution du Sénégal ne permet pas au chef de l'État de se représenter en 2024. Il est démis de ses fonctions 24 heures plus tard.

Les deux événements « n'ont rien à voir », assure le porte-parole adjoint de l'APR, le parti présidentiel, qui affirme que « ce limogeage était dans les tuyaux depuis plusieurs semaines ».

Pour Abdou Mbow, ceux qui entretiennent le débat le feraient « à dessein », pour « polluer » le mandat du chef de l'État. Débat « hors de propos

», renchérit Pape Diouf, porte-parole de la coalition de la majorité Benno Bokk Yakaar, qui insiste sur le programme du président, « l'émergence en 2035 ».

L'affaire Karim Wade évoquée aussi

Il n'empêche, la question suscite un certain malaise au sein de l'APR. Un cadre du parti rappelle que Macky Sall avait exclu publiquement l'éventualité d'un troisième mandat. Un autre qui se définit comme « frondeur » dénonce une « gestion solitaire du pouvoir », la crainte d'une « dérive monarchique », et des « sanctions » qui pourraient découler d'une prise de position sur la succession du chef de l'État.

Avec le limogeage de Sory Kaba, les départs de Moustapha Ka et Samba Ndiaye Seck, de la délégation sénégalaise au comité des droits de l'homme de l'ONU, ne sont pas passés inaperçus. Ils avaient pris position ces derniers jours sur l'affaire Karim Wade et n'avaient pas fermé la porte à une « réhabilitation » du fils de l'ancien chef d'État. Des déclarations « non conformes à la position officielle de l'État du Sénégal », selon le gouvernement.



Français

Éditorial

Les gouvernements devraient écouter Mme Sirleaf

L'Ambassadrice de bonne volonté des Nations Unies pour les personnels de la santé, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, ex-présidente libérienne, a appelé les gouvernements du monde entier et la communauté internationale à donner la priorité à l'éducation de qualité, et à former de plus en plus d'agents de santé.

Selon elle, les pays en voie de développement sont confrontés à l'insuffisance des travailleurs de la santé, et cela est un problème très grave pour ces pays.

Elle a rappelé que tous les postes dans le secteur de la santé, qu'il s'agisse de celui de chirurgien, de médecin généraliste ou d'infirmier, exigent de longues années d'études universitaires et beaucoup d'argent. Beaucoup désirent devenir des professionnels de la santé, mais ils n'ont pas les moyens qu'il faut.

Elle a indiqué que les gouvernements peuvent et doivent faire davantage pour donner une meilleure formation qui permettra aux professionnels de la santé d'être mieux équipés afin de dispenser les soins dont leurs patients ont besoin.

Elle a aussi mis en exergue la petitesse des salaires que reçoivent les travailleurs de la santé. Cela constitue un autre obstacle qui empêche les gens de s'aventurer sur ce terrain.

« Il faut que les gouvernements accordent une priorité à la santé publique en augmentant le budget du secteur de la santé afin que les travailleurs qualifiés puissent recevoir des salaires raisonnables. La plupart des travailleurs de la santé sont motivés par le sens du devoir et désirent aider les malades, mais hélas, ils ne peuvent pas nourrir leurs familles qu'avec cette bonne intention », a déclaré l'Ambassadrice de bonne volonté des Nations Unies.

Nous sommes d'accord avec Mme Sirleaf. Il faut une formation adéquate et des salaires attractifs non seulement pour que cela attire beaucoup de personnes dans ce secteur, mais aussi pour que les professionnels de la santé aient les compétences qu'il faut et qu'ils soient assez motivés pour donner les meilleurs soins aux patients. C'est pourquoi il est indispensable que les gouvernements, en particulier les gouvernements des pays en voie de développement, donnent la priorité à ce secteur.

Le système sanitaire du Libéria, tout comme celui de la plupart des pays africains, est très médiocre, ce qui entraîne des décès évitables en raison du manque d'équipement et de personnel qualifié.

Il faut que cela change. Car ce n'est qu'à ce prix que la prochaine génération aura une expérience de vie assez longue, étant donné que les professionnels de la santé auront la capacité professionnelle et matérielle de sauver les vies.

Cependant, pour des raisons égoïstes, les dirigeants des pays du tiers monde continuent d'inverser les priorités en plaçant les questions les plus importantes au bas de l'échelle.

Si le monde, en particulier l'Afrique et plus particulièrement le Libéria, veut disposer d'un système sanitaire assez efficace où le taux de mortalité infantile et maternelle demeure de plus en plus négligeable, il va falloir que nous revoyions nos copies et accordions une importance à la santé.

Quand la population d'une nation est en bonne santé, cela constitue un atout majeur pour cette nation, car la population est le moteur du développement économique et du progrès humain.

Il est donc regrettable que les législateurs de notre pays s'octroient des salaires exorbitants et des primes fabuleuses au détriment des domaines critiques comme la santé, l'éducation, l'agriculture, etc, auxquelles ils n'accordent aucune attention.

Il est temps que le gouvernement mette à disposition des bourses d'étude dans le secteur de la santé afin que les praticiens approfondissent leurs connaissances en matière de santé publique et qu'ils soient à la hauteur de leur tâche, ce qui permettra par ricochet à la population de se porter bien.

La récente grève des travailleurs de la santé pour réclamer des arriérés de salaire et de meilleures conditions de travail envoie une mauvaise image du pays. C'est la preuve que nous ne sommes pas capables de nous mesurer à nos camarades de la communauté mondiale.

En conséquence, nous nous associons à l'ancienne présidente du Libéria qui est actuellement ambassadrice de bonne volonté pour appeler les gouvernements du monde entier, en particulier d'Afrique et plus précisément le gouvernement du Libéria, à réorienter nos programmes de santé pour rendre le système plus efficace.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Joschka Fischer

Une nouvelle confrontation hégémonique dangereuse au Moyen-Orient

BERLIN - Dans le Moyen-Orient d'hier, un seul conflit global - entre Israël et les pays arabes - se jouait sur plusieurs fronts, face auquel l'Occident avait pour prérogative de préserver l'afflux de pétrole vers l'économie mondiale. Dans le Moyen-Orient d'aujourd'hui, le conflit se caractérise par une plus large bataille entre différents acteurs pour la suprématie régionale.

Ce nouveau conflit a débuté lorsque l'ancien président américain Barack Obama a initié un important retrait des États-Unis hors de la région, mais il s'est intensifié sous la présidence Trump. Obama appliquait lui au moins une vision politique pour la région. Au travers de l'accord de 2015 sur le nucléaire iranien, qui désamorçait la course aux armements nucléaires, Obama avait pour espoir qu'un assouplissement des sanctions et qu'une croissance économique plus rapide permettent une réintégration progressive de l'Iran dans la communauté internationale en une dizaine d'années. Par opposition, Trump ne suit aucune stratégie, et entend dissimuler le retrait américain de la région, actuellement visible en Syrie à travers une trahison pure et simple des Kurdes, sous un discours militant et des exportations massives d'armes en direction des partenaires et alliés des États-Unis dans le Golfe.

Pour sa part, l'Arabie saoudite, pays riche de la région et principale puissance sunnite (si l'on exclut la Turquie), nourrit depuis longtemps des ambitions d'hégémonie régionale - à tout le moins dans le golfe Persique et la péninsule Arabique - et considère l'Iran à dominante chiite comme son principal rival. Depuis quelques années, l'Iran et l'Arabie saoudite se livrent par procuration une guerre désastreuse au Yémen, faisant de très nombreuses victimes civiles et engendrant une véritable catastrophe humanitaire.

Un cap a toutefois été franchi le mois dernier, une attaque nocturne ayant ciblé le cœur de l'industrie pétrolière saoudienne, et créé une onde de choc dans l'économie mondiale. Plusieurs drones sont parvenus à pénétrer dans l'espace aérien saoudien sans être détectés, puis à lancer des frappes chirurgicales sur plusieurs installations pétrolières majeures. La défense aérienne saoudienne - si tant est que l'on puisse la qualifier ainsi - semble avoir été totalement impuissante, ce qui pourrait indiquer que les assaillants avaient une connaissance intime des conditions locales.

Menée en pleine nuit sans aucun signe annonciateur, cette attaque soulève plusieurs interrogations évidentes. Qui en est à l'origine, et comment a-t-elle été préparée ? Bien que les rebelles houthis soutenus par l'Iran l'aient revendiquée, ils ne semblent pas en capacité de mener une telle offensive. Compte tenu des technologies mises en œuvre, et de la logistique nécessaire, le seul suspect plausible n'est autre que l'Iran, dont le gouvernement nie toutefois fermement avoir été aux commandes de l'attaque. Sur le plan du mobile et des intérêts, l'Iran est clairement le pays le plus susceptible de bénéficier d'une telle frappe.

En effet, l'Arabie saoudite se retrouve humiliée sous les yeux du monde entier, apparaissant comme un géant de papier finalement un peu trop fort en gueule. De même, l'échec manifeste du contre-renseignement saoudien dans la détection ou la prévention d'une telle attaque s'accompagne désormais d'une réalité évidente dans laquelle l'Arabie saoudite s'oriente tôt ou tard vers une défaite dans la guerre au Yémen. Dès lors, ses

aspirations hégémoniques deviendront d'autant plus tournées en dérision.

Ainsi la responsabilité de l'attaque contre l'Arabie saoudite peut-elle en fin de compte être quasi-certainement attribuée à Qassem Soleimani, le général en charge de l'unité d'opérations étrangères du Corps de la garde révolutionnaire islamique. À travers cette offensive, l'Iran se prouve à elle-même qu'elle est une puissance régionale majeure, aux capacités technologiques et logistiques impressionnantes et difficilement déjouables, ce qui pourrait désormais modifier fondamentalement l'équation stratégique de la région. Toutes les monarchies arabes du golfe Persique réévaluent d'ores et déjà très certainement leurs perspectives, intérêts et loyautés sur le plan de la politique étrangère.

L'Iran parvient également à faire apparaître Trump comme un dirigeant faible. Après avoir refusé de répondre militairement à cette attaque contre son allié régional précieux, Trump a limogé son conseiller à la sécurité nationale, John Bolton, ennemi juré du régime iranien. Personne ne versera de larme pour le départ de Bolton. Il n'est toutefois pas exclu que son éviction ait encouragé l'attaque.

Le dilettantisme dont fait preuve Trump en politique étrangère - le président américain n'usant d'une grandiloquence militante que pour masquer une absence totale de stratégie et d'options plausibles - semble avoir joué un rôle essentiel dans l'évolution vers la situation actuelle. Sa décision de renoncement à l'accord sur le nucléaire iranien, sans aucune réflexion quant aux conséquences, constitue le point culminant de son imprudence, et s'accompagne de grands dangers.

Une autre dynamique doit néanmoins être examinée. Après le sommet du G7 à Biarritz, en France, qui s'est tenu à la fin du mois août, des discussions ont eu lieu concernant une possible rencontre entre Trump et le président iranien Hassan Rohani. L'attaque contre les installations pétrolières saoudiennes est survenue seulement quelques semaines plus tard, peu avant que les deux dirigeants se rendent à New York à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, où ils auraient pu se rencontrer. La question est par conséquent soulevée de savoir si cette attaque aurait pu constituer l'émanation d'un plus large conflit de pouvoir interne entre radicaux et modérés iraniens.

Quelle que soit la vérité, à l'heure où s'érode déjà la position de l'Arabie saoudite, les deux véritables puissances militaires restantes de la région ne sont autres qu'Israël et l'Iran. Les deux pays semblent s'orienter sans tarder vers une dangereuse confrontation. Israël est profondément inquiète de l'apparente capacité de l'Iran à lancer des frappes à longue distance au moyen de drones ou de missiles balistiques et de croisière. Et comme si cela ne suffisait pas à menacer la sécurité nationale d'Israël, l'Iran pourrait également tenter de fournir des capacités similaires au Hezbollah ou à ses autres intermédiaires régionaux.

Si Israël venait à subir une frappe aussi chirurgicale et sophistiquée que l'offensive menée contre l'Arabie saoudite, le Moyen-Orient se retrouverait plongé dans une guerre d'une ampleur au-delà de tout ce que la région a connu jusqu'à présent. Malheureusement (pour le plus grand bonheur toutefois du président russe Vladimir Poutine), telle est la réalité possible dans un monde où les États-Unis ont renoncé à toute prétention de leadership mondial.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

The Sochi Summit and the Pride of Africa

By Kester Kenn Klomegah*

After nearly three decades of extremely low political, economic and cultural engagement, Russia is indeed returning to Africa. For obvious reasons, Russia's relations with Africa turned extremely worse as some diplomatic representations were unexpectedly cut, all cultural centers closed, and many projects were suspended. Of course, relations with many foreign countries have faded into the background compared with the challenges the country had to deal with in order to preserve its statehood.

Understandably, Russia has had to struggle with its post-Soviet internal and external problems especially during the first decade, from 1991 till 2000, which has been described by policy experts as the "Lost Decade on Africa".

Still the second decade, 2000 to 2010, saw the reawakening with decades among the Kremlin, Government officials and academic researchers debated consistently whether "Russia needs Africa or Africa needs Russia" while African leaders were already turned towards Asian and the Gulf regions especially China and often asked why wake up the "Sleeping Giant Bear". China became the best development suitor in Africa.

During this period, Russia seems to have attained relative political and economic stability. "As we regained our statehood and control over the country, and the economy and the social sphere began to develop, Russian businesses began to look at promising projects abroad, and we began to return to Africa," noted Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov early September when he addressed students and staff of Moscow State Institute for International Relations.

This process has been ongoing for the past 15 years. The return is now taking the form of resuming a very close political dialogue, which has always been at a strategic and friendly level, and now moving to a vigorous economic cooperation.

To reflect and consolidate these trends and in order to draw up plans for expanding consolidated partnerships with the African countries, President Putin initiated the Russia-Africa Summit last year during the BRICS summit in Johannesburg. The initiative was strongly supported. This October, it will be implemented under the co-chairmanship of the heads of Russia and Egypt, since this year Egypt is heading the African Union.

Further, from my research and monitoring, it is interesting to recall here that during the BRICS summit in Durban, on March 26-27, 2013, BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) discussed, among other topics, "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialization."

The BRICS membership gives an additional competitive advantage. Firstly, none of the members of this association is tainted with a colonial past on the African continent, and second, the BRICS member countries as a matter of principle do not interfere in the internal affairs of African countries. None of the BRICS member countries spread democracy in Africa by force or impose their values with the help of expeditionary corps and air strikes.

The U.S. and the European Union (EU) monopoly in African countries is steadily coming to an end, as new players have come to the African continent, namely the BRICS countries. Russia is now the new force. Russia's renewed interest in Africa is due to a desire to restore its previous influence and to build allies as it experiences growing criticism by Western countries.

During my long years of research has shown me that Africa is a huge continent that still requires economic development. Its active demographic growth and abundance of natural resources are creating conditions for the emergence of probably the world's biggest

market in the next few decades.

Today, Africa moves towards raising its social, economic, scientific and technological development, and is playing a significant role in international affairs. African states are strengthening mutually beneficial integration processes within the African Union (AU) and other regional and sub regional organizations across the continent.

Furthermore, African leaders keep in mind other key questions such as rising unemployment, healthcare problems and poor infrastructure development. That is, they now focus on measures toward realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

So, in the contemporary period, Russia and Africa have to, both at a bilateral level and in various multilateral formats, take significant new steps forward in new joint projects in extractive industries, agriculture, healthcare, and education. Besides, there are aspects of the diplomacy that really need focus, for example cultural and social spheres as well as the use of soft power. Indeed, the forthcoming Russia-Africa summit in Sochi on October 23-24 should lay the necessary foundation for improving all these for a stronger partnership.

Quite recently, Foreign Affairs Minister Lavrov assertively acknowledged "Africa is one of our priorities. Our political ties in particular are developing dynamically. But economic cooperation is not as far advanced as our political ties. We believe that we should promote joint activity in order to make broader use of the huge potential of Russian-African trade and investment cooperation."

Political dialogue: Russia has intensified promoting political dialogue, including the exchange of visits at the top levels. Interaction between foreign ministries is expanding. Last year, 12 African foreign ministers visited Russia. According to my calculation, Sergey Lavrov and his deputy Minister, Mikhail Bogdanov, have held talks with nearly 100 African politicians including ministers, deputies between January and September 2019. Bogdanov has interacted with all African ambassadors in Moscow.

Lavrov conducted bilateral dialogue with African countries at the UN in New York, between September 24 and 30, 2019. Lavrov held talks with Foreign Minister of Algeria Sabri Boukadoum, Foreign Minister of Morocco Nasser Bourita and Prime Minister of Sudan Abdallah Hamdouk among others.

During their conversation on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, all the sides discussed matters concerning the further expansion of multifaceted partnership, foreign policy collaboration in regional and international affairs.

With other questions such as the practice of democracy, Russia does support whatever regime is in power. While this makes its policy predictable, it does not encourage good governance and democratic practices in those countries that are severely challenged in these areas. Many other countries follow this practice and even countries like the United States, which often do speak out forcefully on behalf of good governance, are not always consistent.

Economic and investment cooperation: Africa truly is a continent of new opportunities and there is huge potential here for developing economic ties. Many see Africa's growth primarily not because of aid, it is because of businesses and entrepreneurship, consistent efforts at creating wealth and employment. Africa in the 21st century does not need charity but wants to be an economic partner. African countries are not lacking the resources to boost the relationship, but the will power has always been put on hold or totally ignored.

Russia has shown strength in Africa in niche sectors



such as nuclear power development, launching African satellites, and constructing energy and mining projects. It has been seeking to exploit conventional gas and oil fields in Africa; part of its long-term energy strategy is to use Russian companies to create new streams of energy supply. With regard to other economic areas, it may have to identify more sectors like this rather than compete head-to-head in a wide range of sectors with European Union countries, China, the United States, India, and others.

But U.S. President Donald Trump's administration said recently that "Russia has bolstered its influence with increased military cooperation including donations of arms, with which it has gained access to markets and mineral extraction rights. With minimal investment, Russia leverages private military contracts, such as the Wagner Group, and in return receives political and economic influence beneficial to them."

While Russians are aware of the equal competitive conditions in the continent, Africans on the other hand view Russia as another fairly large trading partner and, probably a stabilizing and balancing factor to other foreign players. In terms of stringency of strategic outlook and activeness on economic engagement, the country is seriously lagging behind China, U.S., EU, the Gulf States, India and Brazil.

Trade: Russian aid, trade, and investment in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, are modest. Russian exports to Africa have been growing modestly and reached \$18.5 billion in 2017. Russian imports from Africa have been flat and totaled only \$2.1 billion in 2017. This was well below Turkey's trade with Africa in 2017.

Russian trade is heavily concentrated in North Africa, especially with Egypt. Noticeably, Russia's relationship with North Africa is more significant. Nevertheless, Russia apparently wants to maximize the business relationship rather than the aid relationship. The problem is that Africa has little that Russia wants to buy.

It is, however, necessary to raise trade and economic ties to a high level of political cooperation. Russia and Africa have to show not only an exceptional commitment to long-term cooperation but also readiness for large-scale investments in the African markets taking into account possible risks and high competition.

Equally important are African businesspeople who are looking to work on the Russian market. Definitely, time is needed to solve all these issues including identifying and removing obstacles to mutual bilateral trade and investment.

Weapons and arms diplomacy: After the collapse of the Soviet era, Africa owed US\$20 billion, later written off. This debt was due to weapon and arms delivery to Soviet allies including Ethiopia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and a few other African countries. Now, Russia is the largest seller of arms to Africa and is willing to sell to any country. This gives it a certain advantage as many Western countries prohibit arms sales to a few countries.

More recently, Russia has made significant arms deals with Angola and Algeria. Egypt, Tanzania, Somalia, Mali, Sudan and Libya have also bought arms from Russia. The Russians also provide military training and support.

TO BE CONT'D

Cummings' economic prescriptions

The leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC) Alexander B. Cummings shares his perspectives on possible ways to rescuing the falling Liberian economy under President George Manneh Weah, calling for a predictable environment to attract investors.

The ANC is one of four collaborating opposition political parties working to defeat President Weah in the next elections.

Mr. Cummings recommends that government should work on restoring lost confidence in the economy by addressing wave of violence across the country, properly account for financial improprieties under its watch and employ competent Liberians with integrity and experience.

His recommendations are contained in a five-page concept paper recently submitted to a National Economic Dialogue hosted by



the Weah administration in September to solicit ideas from professional Liberians, including economists, entrepreneurs, bankers and business executives on how to salvage the economy that is in a free fall.

These recommendations

were specifically addressed to the chairman of the National Economic Dialogue, Dr. Toga GayweaMcintosh, who had invited the opposition politician to serve as a panelist.

He calls on the Executive branch of government to avoid

interference with the Judiciary to restore investors' confidence in the legal system, while underscoring the need for other branches to respect and uphold the independence of the Judiciary, including its financial autonomy.

Despite persistent non-payment of salaries for judicial employees, the government had recently sought to reduce salaries of judges, as part of ongoing austerity measures in the public sector.

But the former corporate executive specifically warns that delay or lack of payment of salaries of judges and judicial officers has the propensity to undermine the rule of law here.

Though a new comer to Liberian politics after spending most of his professional life abroad, working with Coca Cola Corporation, Mr. Cummings is a bitter critic of President Weah and his government, once describing the President as being inept.

He calls on President Weah and his officials to publicly declare their assets in the interest of transparency and accountability, something, he notes, would serve as strong indicator of government's commitment to its fight against rampant corruption and abuse in the public sector.

He further recommends to the government to develop new economic growth sectors such as Cocoa, Cassava and Marine fisheries, explaining, "By doing so, we can expand production, processing and marketing of cocoa, cassava and fisheries for domestic trade and global export. This will create productive economic livelihood for over thousands of Liberians in 2 to 3 years. Liberia's participation in the global cocoa, cassava and fishery trade will attract millions of dollars in foreign exchange."

On the question of skyrocketing exchange rate and scarcity of foreign exchange, the ANC leader wants government to realign the national budget to increase allocation to Agriculture with focus on

scaling up production of rice, vegetables, fruits and food processing for domestic market, adding, "In doing that, you will reduce the need for United States Dollars.

He cites tourism as a revenue and job creation outlet, calling on the government to invest in the huge and potentially viable sector, and support the National Investment Commission to develop and implement an investment and tourism promotion strategy.

"Tourism has contributed more than 5% of global Gross Domestic Product and has created more than 180 million jobs globally."

He discloses that in 2018, contribution of travel to GDP for Sierra Leone was 2.4 percent, according to the World Bank and is expected to increase in 2019, but notes, "Liberia, on the other hand, has not harnessed the potential provided by this reliable frontier for job growth and budget allocations for the fiscal years 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 have not demonstrated real commitment to capturing this opportunity."

Mr. Cummings observes that the lack of electricity has been identified as one of the binding constraints inhibiting economic growth in the country, noting that Liberia has one of the lowest electricity access rates in the world with many studies indicating that only about 8 percent of the households are connected to the national grid, while less than 7 percent of the population in Monrovia has regular access to power.

He points out that average tariff is about \$0.35/kWh, which is one of the highest tariffs in the world; compared to other countries, Liberians pay over \$0.25/kWh, which he describes as a disincentive to new investments and survival of existing ones.

"The Government of Liberia must deal with the transmission and distribution issues to migrate power from



Public workers threaten protest

By Winston W. Parley

The Consortium of Public Sector Workers Organizations of Liberia, a group comprising health workers, public school teachers and all civil servants has threatened a nationwide go-slow if the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) - led government fails to pay all arrears due public employees by 31 October 2019.

"Failure on the part of the government of Liberia to address these grave concerns and that border around the labor rights and economic livelihood of public sector workers and their families within the period of two weeks and from this date will result to a nationwide go - slow action by all public

sector workers within the Republic of Liberia," group says.

Reading the Public Sector Workers' resolution Wednesday, 23 October, Civil Service Association of Liberia president Mr. Mulbah Johnson demands an immediate halt to "all unapproved and unauthorized percentage deductions" on the salaries of Public Sector Workers by the Ministry of Finance.

In the wake of continued strikes here for salaries, members and officials of the ruling CDC, including Grand Kru County Rep. Jonathan Fonati Koffa who crossed over to the ruling party have embarked on blaming the opposition here for public sector workers' protests for arrears.

About a week after

protesting public school students who blocked the street in demand of speaking with President George Manneh Weah were tear gas by police and then rushed to hospital, Koffa alleges that the opposition exposed the kids to danger by putting them in the streets to protest.

However the students' protest was triggered after public school teachers abandoned classes to strike for their unpaid salaries.

The situation outside the President's office was terrifying as several students were rushed to hospital during the protest as a result of dozens of tear gas canisters fired by riot police to disperse protesting public schools students.

Given the CDC government and its loyalists' blame - shifting tactics against opposition in addressing pay crisis, it is not clear if the latest threat for a nationwide go - slow by the Public Sector Workers is influenced by the opposition in the face of the hard realities of economic woes that have struck the Weah regime.

Public workers here go for months without pay, and the CDC government would struggle at times to make part - payment of arrears to employees at a given institution whose employees are striking for unpaid salaries.

As part of demands by the public workers, Mr. Mulbah Johnson says government must immediately employ all vetted supplementary or voluntary

teachers, and that all salary arrears for public sector workers be paid on or before October 31, 2019.

He insists that government payroll be brought back to the CSA which he says is clothed with the statutory responsibility to appropriate salaries based on its grading system.

Besides, the public sector workers organization says it wants all premiums deducted from public workers to be remitted to the respective insurance companies.

The group also wants a regular deduction and remittance to the National Teachers Association of Liberia (NTAL) the shares and loans of the NTAL's Credit Union Cooperative membership dues as enshrined in a "legal document" submitted to CSA and MFDP.

The group concludes that the NTAL's membership due of 2% per member be fully implemented and remitted to the organization for its smooth operation.



Rep. Koffa blames opposition

-for protest



Grand Kru County Rep. Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Grand Kru County Representative, Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa accuses the opposition community here sending public school students in the streets to protest in demand of their teachers' salaries. He describes the alleged action by the opposition as 'total nonsense.'

Speaking in his office at the Capitol Tuesday, October 22, Representative Koffa,

who crossed over from the opposition Liberty Party to the governing Coalition for Democratic Change said protest should be the least thing on the agenda of the opposition, saying putting kids in the streets to protest exposes them to danger, and caution that if the opposition themselves were given the opportunity to serve, they may experience the worse protest in the history of Liberia.

"Why will opposition

encourage school-going kids to come to the streets for teachers' pay; it's like exposing them to danger and we all know that riot police will not come to the streets during protest to shake people's hands; instead, they are brought in the streets to use all measures that will stop people from protesting," he argues in apparent defense of Police brutality that characterized the recent protest by students.

The authorities here are shifting blames on a situation that turned bloody after riot Police fire barrage of teargas canisters, leaving several protesting students injured and admitted in hospital.

According to him, the worse thing the students did during their protest was to stand before the convoy of the President in a bid to seek his attention.

"Their action of blocking the presidential convoy is treasonable under the Liberian law and we know the consequences



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Batshuayi strikes late to give Chelsea win at Ajax

Michy Batshuayi came off the bench to score a late winner at Ajax as Chelsea stunned last year's Champions League semi-finalists.

The Dutch giants had won both their Group H games prior to the visit of Frank Lampard's side but struggled to break down their disciplined opponents and were undone when



Batshuayi slammed home in the final few minutes.

Ajax did have a goal ruled out by the Video Assistant Referee in the first half when Quincy Promes' strike was ruled out by the smallest of margins, while Edson Alvarez headed against the post after the break.

But Chelsea fully deserved their win for a hugely impressive away performance as they recorded a second

successive win that moves them top of the group, level with Ajax on six points.

The victory sets things up for a tantalising top-of-the-table meeting between the two sides at Stamford Bridge on 5 November.

Much has been made of this young Ajax side after they came within a whisker of reaching the Champions League final last season, knocked out by Tottenham in

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